

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951) held at
Conway Hall, London, W.C.1., on 23rd, 24th, and 25th
March 1951.

Conference Sessions:

First Day - 11.20 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Second Day - 11.15 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Third Day - 11.25 a.m. to 6.15 p.m.

Attendance:

	<u>Delegates present</u>	<u>Branches represented.</u>
<u>First Day</u>	71	26
Delegates from Birmingham, Camberwell, Edgware, Kingston, Palmers Green, and Woolwich were permitted to sit without credentials.		
Comrades Moss (Edgware) and Turner (Paddington) were not eligible to sit as their appointment conflicted with Rule 16.		
Eccles and High Wycombe were not represented.		
<u>Second Day</u>	61	27
Delegates from Birmingham, Camberwell, and High Wycombe were permitted to sit without credentials.		
Eccles was not represented.		
<u>Third Day</u>	70	27
Delegates from Birmingham and Croydon were permitted to sit without credentials.		
Eccles was not represented.		

Central Branch members returned 30 voting papers.

CHAIRMAN: A. Turner.
VICE-CHAIRMAN: R. Ambridge.
TELLERS: Dunn and Guy (First Day)
Courtney and Kesten (Second Day)
Kesten and Shea (Third Day).

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Status of Standing Orders Committee".

Resolution - Ealing (Price) and Camberwell (Cosham) "That the 1935 terms of reference for the Standing Orders Committee be read." Agreed.

REPORT OF THE 47TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS: No Action.
2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCES: No Action.
3. BRANCHES, MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANISATION:
 - (a) Branches No Action.
 - (b) Membership

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

Resolution - Fulham Branch "That in the event of the Executive Committee failing to accept the Form "A" for D. Fenwick after it was accepted on two occasions by the Fulham Branch that the matter be laid before the Annual Conference.

Lost 39 - 44.

Resolution - Camberwell (Baldwin) and Lewisham (Edmonds) "Next business"

Lost by a large majority

Resolution - Edgware (Price) and Marylebone (Kilpatrick) "That the vote be taken." Carried.

(c) Central Branch.

(i) Membership

No action.

(ii) Finances.

No action.

(d) Report of the Central Organiser

No action.

(e) Proportional Representation.

Resolution - Manchester Branch "That the present method of voting at Conference be abandoned and that in its place be substituted a method of direct representation as defined by Manchester Branch."

This was ruled out of order by the Chairman on the grounds that it conflicted with Party Rules.

Resolution - Manchester Branch (Marsden and Hopwood) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the possibility of altering the present method of voting at Conference and substituting in its place a method of direct representation as defined by Manchester Branch, and that a report on the matter be furnished to the Delegate Meeting." Carried 44 - 10.

(f) Ballots

Resolution - Hackney (James) and Lewisham (Guy) "That this Conference endorses the action of the E.C. relating to the annual ballot, party polls and referenda." Carried by a large majority.

(g) Head Office Premises

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Head Office Premises"

Item for Discussion - Lewisham "Party Premises".

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

Resolution - Paddington (Walters and Cudmore) "That this Conference is firmly of the opinion that Head Office premises under no circumstances should be let to any organisations or people other than branches or groups of the S.P.G.B."

Lost 7 - 56

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Millen) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to see that the new premises are re-decorated inside and outside."

Resolution - S.W. London (McLaughlin) and Palmers Green (Lane) "Next business".

Carried

Resolution - Hackney (Wilmott and James) "That this Conference holds that no Socialist principle is involved in owning or sub-letting."

Carried 42 - 4.

(h) Head Office Organisation

No action.

(i) History of the Party and Companion Parties.

No action.

(j) Head Office Library.

Resolution - Paddington (Millen and Bryan) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to purchase more recently published books for H.O. Library."

Agreed.

(k) Copies of E.C. Minutes.

No action.

(l) Head Office Assistant: Part Time.

No action.

(m) Head Office Secretarial work.

No action.

4. PROPAGANDA:

Resolution - Edgware "That this Conference is not in favour of appointing a full-time Provincial Propagandist Organiser at the present time and instructs the E.C. to appoint two or more members for a period of three months to work together in different Provincial centres, during the Spring or Summer each year; these members to be paid at a wage agreed between them and the E.C." Carried 60 - 12.

Amendment - Glasgow "That 'three months' be deleted and 'six months' be inserted."

Lost 32 - 39.

Page 51.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

Amendment - St.Pancras "That 'a wage' be deleted and 'an allowance' be inserted." Carried 45 - 28.

(11) Resolution - Paddington "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to arrange a greater number of centrally organised and well advertised large indoor meetings on the Socialist case generally and on current questions of special interest in view of the lack of such meetings in the present year." Carried 59 - 15.

(11) Resolution - Fulham "That every effort be made to increase the number of mid-day meetings." Carried 75 - 0.

(1) Provincial Action as above.

Item for Discussion - Manchester "Methods of Improving Provincial Propaganda".

(11) London Action as above.

(111) Sale of Literature and Taking of Collections. No action.

(1v) Means of Improving Propaganda

Item for Discussion - Paddington "In future greater stress should be laid by Party Members and branches on contacting other organisations such as the Y.C.L., Labour League, Young Conservatives, etc., and state without compromise the Party's case with the object of getting the Party's position better known by members of such organisations, advertising our meetings and selling literature."

Resolution - Hackney (Wilmott and James) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to instruct the Propaganda Committee to set in motion the necessary machinery for intensifying and integrating party activity in the East London Area" Carried by a large majority.

Amendment - Bloomsbury (Moore and Devereux) "That 'East London' be deleted and that 'London, area by area' be substituted." Lost by a large majority.

(v) "Psychology and Socialist Propaganda" No action.

(vi) Propaganda Meetings; Summary of Statistics. No action.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

(vii) Speakers.

Resolution - Camberwell (Baldwin and Cosham) "That this Conference recommends that all mid-week meetings be run under the auspices of the Propaganda Committee and that monthly reports be submitted."

Resolution - Bloomsbury (Devereux) and Birmingham (Keller) "Next business."

Carried 31 - 15.

5. LITERATURE:

(1) Weekly Newspaper:

No action.

(11) Fortnightly 'Socialist Standard':

Resolution - Edgware Branch "That this Conference deplores the refusal of the 1950 E.C. to prepare a detailed report on a fortnightly 'S.S.' requested by the 1950 Conference and Delegate Meeting and instructs the 1951 E.C. to prepare the necessary report for submission to the 1951 Delegate Meeting."

Lost 26 - 47.

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference strongly censures the 47th E.C. for failing to carry out the requests to investigate the possibility of producing a fortnightly 'S.S.' which were made by large majorities at both the 1950 Conference and Delegate Meeting."

Lost 24 - 48.

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to prepare a detailed report on the necessary finance and organisation involved in the production of a fortnightly 'Socialist Standard'."

Lost 33 - 46.

(111) 'Socialist Standard' Material:

Item for Discussion - Southend "That this Conference recommends that the Editorial Committee shall illustrate some articles for the 'Socialist Standard' with reprints of photographs, cartoons, diagrams and maps."

Resolution - Southend (Cottis and Grisley) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to investigate the possibility of including any cartoons or useful diagrams in the 'S.S.'"

Lost 14 - 31.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

- (iv) 'Socialist Standard': Supply and Quantity of Articles:
No action.
- (v) 'Socialist Standard': Rejected Articles: No action.
- (vi) 'Socialist Standard': Alteration of Articles:
No action.
- (vii) 'Socialist Standard': Date of Publication.
No action.
- (viii) 'Socialist Standard': Number Printed. No action.
- (ix) Pamphlets: Appointment of Pamphlets Committee.

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Walters) "That this Conference is of the opinion that the Editorial Committee is the best committee to deal with pamphlets."

Resolution - Lewisham (Guy and Rose) "That consideration of this resolution be deferred until the 1951 Delegate Meeting pending a report from the E.C."
Carried 36 - 13.

Resolution - Hackney "That publication of a new edition of 'Questions of the Day' be expedited."
Carried 75 - 1.

Resolution - Hackney "That a new edition of 'Socialism and Religion' be published."
Carried 52 - 19.

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "The Executive Committee to consider the production of a yearly review of major events, in pamphlet form, as well as the re-publication of 'Questions of the Day'."

Resolution - Kelvingrove "That the E.C. investigate the possibilities of publishing an annual which could include articles of a theoretical nature which have appeared in continued form in early 'Standards', reprints of the Marxist classics and works which are now out of print. It could also include articles specially written for it and if possible, contain cartoons and illustrations. The price not to be more than 10/-d."
Lost 26 - 49.

- (x) Pamphlet on War. No action.
- (xi) Pamphlets: Cover Design. No action.
- (xii) 'S.S.' and Pamphlets: Sales and Stocks: No action.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

(xiii) Literature Sales Organisation:

Resolution - Manchester "That private Provincial subscribers receive their copies of the 'S.S.' through Provincial branches." Lost 14 - 45.

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference view, with concern the fall in literature sales and instructs the E.C. to form a Literature Sales Committee (in place of the Central Circulating Committee) composed of energetic, enthusiastic comrades who will appreciate the urgent need to increase the sales of Party literature." Carried 47 - 30.

(xiv) Book Department

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Employment of fulltime writers." No action.

Resolution - Lewisham (Guy and Locke) "That this Conference is opposed to the employment of full-time writers at the present time."

Resolution - Price (Edgware) and Camberwell (Baldwin) "Next business". Carried.

Resolution - St. Pancras "That this Conference deprecates the action of the E.C. in instructing Comrade Thompson to cease publication of 'Socialist View' and instructs the E.C. to rescind the resolutions in question." Lost 6 - 77.

Resolution - Southend Branch "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to give guidance and encouragement to those Comrades who are interested in the production of an internal Party journal to facilitate the fullest discussion on controversial subjects." Lost 32 - 36.

Resolution - West Ham "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to provide an internal Party journal for the publication of:- 1) Letters from members on subjects of a controversial nature on which there is no official Party line. 2) Articles of a technical nature considered to be unsuitable for publication in the 'S.S.'." Lost 30 - 44.

Amendment - Manchester Branch "Delete all after 'members' and insert 'on subjects concerning which there is a controversy within the Party'." Lost 21 - 61.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

Item for Discussion - Glasgow "The advisability of an inter-party Journal for the purpose of discussing controversial matters; controlled by an appropriate Party committee."

Resolution - Edgware (Waite and Price) "That this Conference is in favour of an internal Party Journal and recommends the E.C. to appoint a committee to establish one." Carried 48 - 14.

Resolution - Manchester Branch "That a committee be set up to make a special study of the work of Marx and Engels. This committee to invite comment from individual Party members and the results of the committee's findings be used to arrive at as precise an assessment of the relationship of the theories of Marx and Engels and the case of the S.P.G.B. and most particularly the point of disagreement between the S.P.G.B. and the theories of Marx and Engels." Lost 22 - 47.

Addendum - Leyton "That the committee consist of nominees from Branches, the number not to exceed two from each Branch." Lost 13 - 54.

6. EDUCATION:

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Cudmore) "That this Conference considers that the present classes are unsatisfactory and recommends that the E.C. consider the whole question of the education of Party members." Lost 13 - 27.

7. TRAINING OF MEMBERS FOR FULL-TIME POSTS. No action.

8. PUBLICITY. No action.

9. ELECTORAL ACTIVITY.

Resolution - Camberwell Branch "That at all future elections the Party shall attempt to secure a hearing at all Trade Union branches in the constituency or constituencies to be contested." Carried 52 - 5.

Resolution - Paddington Branch "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to continue with the Party's electoral activity and to contest at least N.Paddington and East Ham South at the next General Election." Lost 37 - 47.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

lost with X Res
Addendum - Kelvingrove "If in the opinion of the Executive Committee, Party funds permit electoral activity."
Carried 43 - 39.

Addendum - St. Pancras "Providing funds are available."
Lost 22 - 49.

Amendment - Edgware "Delete all after 'activity' and add, 'but that consideration be given to constituencies other than N. Paddington and East Ham South and that the E.C. instruct the Parliamentary Committee to report to them on the suitability of other constituencies.'" Lost 21 - 66.

Resolution - S.W. London "That in view of the serious financial position of the Party, contesting of elections be discontinued until such time as adequate support is forthcoming." Lost 23 - 62.

Amendment - Manchester "Delete all after 'such time as' and substitute 'the whole question of contesting elections has been re-discussed at a Party Conference.'" Lost 24 - 63.

X
Resolution - Camberwell (Baldwin and Lawlor) "That the Party continue electoral activity in areas where the E.C. sees fit."
Carried 43 - 20.
(9 Abstentions)

Resolution - Ealing (Curtis) and Fulham (Keyes) "That further consideration of Electoral Activity be deferred until next Annual Conference when all questions including finance can be considered in a clearer light." Lost by a large majority.

The Chairman's ruling in allowing the above resolution from Camberwell was challenged but a motion that the chairman leave the chair was lost 12 - 37.

10. REVISION OF THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

X
Resolution - Fulham (Cox and Keys) "That this conference recommends the E.C. to set up a committee to examine the possibility of revising the wording of the Declaration of Principles."
Carried 30 - 25.

11. ORGANISATIONS ABROAD.

Resolution - Hackney (James and Temple) "That this conference

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

recommends the E.C. to call for a report from the Overseas Secretary on the position of the Companion Parties." Agreed.

Resolution - Paddington (Walters and Bryan) "That this Conference suggests that we should pay for the "Western Socialist" and let the W.S.P. have the "Socialist Standard" without payment.

Resolution - Camberwell (Gosham) and Southend (Cottis) "That this matter be referred to the E.C. for report to the 1951 Delegate Meeting." Agreed.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS were read from the W.S.P. of U.S.A. and the S.P. of Ireland, and letters from sympathisers in Africa and Austria.

Resolution - Lewisham and Palmers Green "That fraternal greetings be sent to all Parties and these Comrades." Agreed.

It was agreed that the letter from the Austrian comrades be passed to the Editorial Committee for publication in the "S.S.".

12. FINANCE.

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Ways and means of raising funds."

Resolution - Bloomsbury (Adams and Kersley) "That this conference recommends that socials and raffles should only be organised by the Party where they meet the entertainment needs of members and that otherwise funds should be raised in ways which form part of the propaganda and educational activity of the Party." Lost 16 - 30.

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "That for purposes of Business and finance this Party year should run from 1st December to 30th November."

Resolution - Fulham (Irvine and Cox) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the advisability of the Party Year running from 1st December to 30th November." Carried 44 - 9.

13. E.C. SUB-COMMITTEES:

Resolution - Leyton "That details for vacancies on Committees for which members are required be circularised to Branches." Carried 53 - 4.

Minutes of the 47th Annual Conference (1951), (Contd.).

14. CONFERENCE PROCEDURE:

Item for Discussion - Edgware "Can Conference procedure be improved."

15. AMENDMENTS TO RULES:

Camberwell, Fulham, Islington & S.W.London Branches:

Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d.' and insert '6d.'." Lest 37 - 48.

St.Pancras Branch:

Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d' and insert '4d'." Lest 38 - 44.

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'threepence'." Lest 15 - 55.

Islington Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'Twopence' and insert 'fourpence'." Lest 17 - 57.

S.W.London Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'Twopence' and insert 'fivepence'." Lest 9 - 74.

Hackney Branch:

Rule 17, Line 4. "Delete 'appoint all Party representatives in debates.'." Lest 12 - 73.

16. ADOPTION OF E.C. REPORT:

Resolution - Birmingham (Grew) and High Wycombe (Roe) "That the report of the 47th Executive Committee be adopted." Agreed.

Collections:

First Day - £14.10. 0.

Second Day - 11.15. 6.

Third Day - 9.10. 0.

£35.15. 6.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 47th ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1951

held at

CONWAY HALL

Red Lion Square, London. W.C.1.

on

23rd, 24th, and 25th MARCH 1951.

	<u>COLUMBIA</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>
Adoption of U.S. Report	12	17
Announcements to Clubs	13	27
Conference Proceedings	14	27
Franchise, Membership and Organization	13	2 - 3
U.S. Sub-Committee	13	25 - 27
Education	6	19 - 20
Electoral Activity	6	22 - 23
Executive Committee	1 & 2	1
Finance	12	24 - 25
Literature	6	16 - 19
Organizations Abroad	11	24
Propaganda	4	8 - 10
Publicity	6	20
Training of Members	7	20

.....

1) "That this conference be held at the Party Stationery" branches or Head Office to be determined from Head Office

CONTENTS.

	<u>ITEM.</u>	<u>PAGE.</u>
Adoption of E.C. Report	16	27
Amendments to Rules	15	27
Conference Procedure	14	27
Branches, Membership and Organisation	13	2 - 5
E.C. Sub-Committees	13	26 - 27
Education	6	19 - 20
Electoral Activity	9	20 - 23
Executive Committee.	1 & 2	1
Finance	12	24 - 26
Literature	5	10 - 19
Organisations Abroad	11	24
Propaganda	4	5 - 10
Publicity	8	20
Training of Members.	7	20

.....

Conference Session
First Day
Second
Third
Attendee

OLUTION

ing the

Conference Sessions:

First Day - 11.20 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Second Day - 11.15 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Third Day - 11.25 a.m. to 6.15 p.m.

Attendance:

	<u>Delegates present</u>	<u>Branches represented</u>
<u>First Day</u>	71	26

Delegates from Birmingham, Camberwell, Edware, Kingston, Palmers Green, and Woolwich were permitted to sit without credentials.

Comrades Moss (Edware) and Turner (Paddington) were not eligible to sit as their appointment conflicted with Rule 16.
Eccles and High Wycombe were not represented.

<u>Second Day</u>	61	27
-------------------	----	----

Delegates from Birmingham, Camberwell and High Wycombe were permitted to sit without credentials.
Eccles was not represented.

<u>Third Day</u>	70	27
------------------	----	----

Delegates from Birmingham and Croydon were permitted to sit without credentials.
Eccles was not represented.

Central Branch members returned 30 voting papers.

<u>CHAIRMAN:</u>	A. Turner
<u>VICE-CHAIRMAN:</u>	R. Ambridge
<u>TELLERS:</u>	Dunn and Guy (First Day) Courtney and Keston (Second Day) Keston and Shea (Third Day)

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Status of Standing Orders Committee."

Resolution - Ealing (Price) and Camberwell (Cosham) "That the 1935 terms of reference for the Standing Orders Committee be read."
Agreed.

REPORT OF THE 47th EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| (1) <u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS:</u> | <u>No action.</u> |
| (2) <u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ATTENDANCES:</u> | <u>No action.</u> |

18. 3. 6.
44. 4. 5.
£112. 7. 11.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

(3) BRANCHES, MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANISATION:

(a) Branches:

No action.

(b) Membership:

No action.

Resolution - Fulham "That in the event of the Executive Committee failing to accept the Form "A" for D. Fenwick after it was accepted on two occasions by the Fulham Branch that the matter be laid before Annual Conference."

Lost 39 - 4

Discussion. Fulham informed the Conference that they had held a special meeting and had decided that they did not wish the resolution to be discussed. A short discussion followed then a motion that the vote be taken was carried by a large majority.

(c) Central Branch:

(i) Membership.

No action.

(ii) Finance.

No action.

(d) Report of the Central Organiser:

No action.

(e) Proportional Representation:

Resolution - Manchester "That the present method of voting at Conference be abandoned and that in its place be substituted a method of direct representation as defined by Manchester Branch."

After a vote of direction which was lost i.e. that the Chairman should accept the motion, he ruled that the motion was out of order on the grounds that it conflicted with Party Rules.

Resolution - Manchester (Marsden and Hopwood) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the possibility of altering the present method of voting at Conference and substituting in its place a method of direct representation as defined by Manchester Branch, and that a report on the matter be furnished to the Delegate Meeting." Carried 44 - 10.

Discussion. Manchester outlined the method of direct representation as suggested by Manchester Branch, whereby the actual votes of those members present at the Branch meeting when resolutions were discussed should be counted at Conference, for and against. This was a more fair way than as at present, and would give a more correct picture of Party views.

Edgewood said they thought Manchester had a case, but doubted if it would work. If adopted, would it give the Party a clearer picture of the views of the Branches.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

They suggested that at present, when issues were discussed at Branches it was not usually the case that they were equally divided. Usually it would be found that the majority of any given Branch were either greatly in favour or against, irrespective of a particular Branch attendance.

High Wycombe Delegate stated that he thought it was well worth while discussing such a matter of Democratic procedure.

(f) Ballots:

Resolution - Hackney (James) and Lewisham (Guy) "That this Conference endorses the action of the E.C. relating to the Annual ballot, party polls and referenda." Carried by a large majority.

(g) Head Office Premises:

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Head Office Premises."

Item for Discussion - Lewisham "Party Premises."

Discussion. Paddington asked for information regarding a Trust Deed drawn up in connection with the purchase of 52, Clapham High Street.

The General Secretary stated that the E.C. had not had sight of the Trust Deed; the Trustees had seen it and the E.C. agreed that it should be signed on their behalf by him. Paddington stated that the Party were launched on something for which there was no precedent; they deprecated that the E.C. authorised the signing of an agreement without first thoroughly examining it. The Party did not own the property, it was owned by the Trustees; the Party therefore did not control the premises.

Comrade R. Ambridge (Trustee) said that the Party was a non-corporate body; it was true that the E.C. did not have sight of the Trust Deed which clearly laid down the relationship between the Party and the Trustees; the property was bought out of moneys provided by the Party and the Trustees could only act when instructed to do so by the E.C.; within the Trust Deed was a clause indemnifying the Trustees against loss. It could be awkward if one Trustee refused to sign any documents, then, to obtain permission for another Trustee to hold the property one would have to go to law. Trustees are elected annually and if they were changed the act of transferring the property from the old to the new Trustees would cost approximately £15 to £18 each time. The Title Deeds etc. would be held by the Party bankers. The relevant passages in the Deed relating to Trustees were then read to the Conference.

The General Secretary said that he was instructed to sign the Deed on behalf of the Party, the Trustees signed on behalf of themselves; he had since written to the E.C. on

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

the signing of this document.

The Chairman said that he had taken the Trust Deed to a solicitor. The legal position was that Comrades R. Ambrose and I. Groves had bought the premises and the Party had no control in law over them.

A member of the Premises Committee said that this was the only way to buy premises.

A resolution that the General Secretary's letter to the E.C. be read was lost 18 - 35.

The General Secretary said that according to the solicitor who acted for the Party the legal position was that the Trustees could sell the property over the heads of the Party without the Party being aware of it. At the time of signing the E.C. thought this position was safeguarded. At present if the premises were wrongly sold by the Trustees any purchaser would be legally entitled to hold the property and the only redress for the Party would be to prosecute the Trustees. He then outlined the purpose and effect of the Trust Deed.

Bloomsbury said that the position was quite clear. The Trustees could do what they liked and if any matter arose, the Party would have to sue the Trustees. Trustees were Comrades who had to be trusted. It was for the Party to be sure that responsible members were always elected Trustees.

Resolution - Paddington (Walters and Cudmore) "That this Conference is firmly of the opinion that Head Office Premises under no circumstances should be let to any organisations or people other than branches or groups of the S.P.G.B."

Lost 7 - 56.

Discussion. Paddington opening said that methods for raising money should be those used in the past.

Ealing said they would oppose the resolution because the Party might have to sublet rooms and hire out the hall; the premises could for example be let to Trade Unions which would not be objectionable to the Party.

West Ham opposed the resolution. It was bad that the Conference should seek to direct the E.C. on such matters.

Camberwell said that we should be concerned with the immediate future and wait for a year before any kind of decision was taken.

Paddington in winding up said that they were afraid that the Party would become preoccupied with letting and subletting its property if the resolution was not carried.

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Millen) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to see that the new premises are re-decorated inside and outside."

Resolution - S.W. London (McLaughlin and Palmers Green (Lane))
"Next business."
Carried.

R
ITE.
Croy
The t
press
RESOL

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Resolution - Hackney (Wilmott and James) "That this Conference holds that no Socialist principle is involved in owning or sub-letting." Carried 42 - 4.

Discussion. Hackney opening said that no question of principle was involved. A practical view should be taken. Subletting would not constitute an infringement of the party principles. If the Party had excessive room space there was no reason not to sub-let. 52, Clapham High Street, apart from the top floor, was quite big enough for years to come even if the Party increased its activities four-fold. If we should sub-let the money gained could be used for socialist purposes. The Party had kept its political integrity all the time and it was hardly likely that sub-letting would demoralise it.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| (h) <u>Head Office Organisation.</u> | <u>No action.</u> |
| (i) <u>History of the Party and Companion Parties.</u> | <u>No action.</u> |
| (j) <u>Head Office Library.</u> | |

Resolution - Paddington (Millen and Bryan) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to purchase more recently published books for Head Office Library." Agreed.

Discussion. Paddington opened by saying that whilst it was true that certain books could be obtained from public libraries, and therefore books need not be purchased on any large scale, the Librarians and Party members should watch for important modern publications on politics and economics. There were some important but cheap books which could be purchased by the Party, i.e. Penguin series on Conservative, Labour and Communist Parties.

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| (k) <u>Copies of E.C. Minutes.</u> | <u>No action.</u> |
| (L) <u>Head Office Assistant: Part Time.</u> | <u>No action.</u> |
| (m) <u>Head Office Secretarial work.</u> | <u>No action.</u> |

(4) PROPAGANDA:
(1) Provincial

Resolution - Edgware "That this Conference is not in favour of appointing a full-time Provincial Propagandist Organiser at the present and instructs the E.C. to appoint two or more members for a period of three months to work together in different Provincial centres, during the Spring and Summer each year; these members to be paid at a wage agreed between them and the E.C." Carried 60 - 12.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Amendment - Glasgow "That 'three months' be deleted and 'six months' be inserted." Lost 32 - 39.

Amendment - St. Pancras "That 'a wage' be deleted and 'an allowance' be inserted." Carried 45 - 28.

Discussion. Glasgow stated that they considered 3 months was inadequate, and that a period of six months would enable propagandists to cover far more Provincial centres. Edgware said that they thought a period of three months was more convenient for the propagandists and there was nothing in the resolution to stop the E.C. from making the period six months if necessary. An E.C. member stated that at the present time he was opposed to the appointment of a full-time Propagandist. He thought that a team of two or more part-time members could organise successful meetings in the Provinces, one on his own could do very little if branches could not support him, as had been his experience during last summer with some of the Provincial Branches. He suggested that young members who had had say, two years experience on the London platform and who were available for 2 - 3 months in the summer months, could be sent as part-time propagandists to the Provinces. He visualised in the future two teams comprised of 2 - 3 members who could organise and hold meetings independently without having to rely too much on local Branch support.

Item for Discussion - Manchester "Methods of improving Provincial Propaganda."

Discussion. Manchester stated that they felt there was an indifferent attitude in the Party towards the question of Provincial Propaganda. If a speaker was wanted for a Provincial meeting, they had to write to London, instead of the E.C. seeing to it that speakers were sent regularly. They suggested that a summer school might be run for Provincial members, and that speakers from London could attend. Paddington said that the problem seemed to be that although some Provincial Branches were fairly large they did not have many speakers of their own. The thing to do was to try and increase their own speaking strength. Southend said that speakers had to come to London to take the test, and it was about time that Branches of the North had their own tests without the necessity of members travelling in some cases 400 miles to take the test. West Ham suggested that a speaker from London who was travelling to the Provinces could test members. Glasgow and Manchester branches were big enough to hold their own speakers classes. Manchester said that they did not think that by making it

ITE
Croy
The t
press
Resol

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

easier for Provincial members to take the Speakers Test more speakers would be produced. The present method of testing speakers was no bar if members were sufficiently interested and keen. He suggested that perhaps a correspondence course for intending speakers might help.

Edgware regarding the suggestions put forward for a Summer School and correspondence courses, asked whether they were practicable. A correspondence course would certainly involve a considerable amount of work. If Manchester wanted to run a Summer School they should organise it themselves, and if they could do this they would get help from H.O.

(ii) London.

Resolution - Paddington "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to arrange a greater number of centrally organised and well advertised large indoor meetings on the Socialist case generally and on current questions of special interest in view of the lack of such meetings in the present year."

Carried 59 - 15.

Discussion. Paddington opened by saying that the small number of large indoor meetings held during the last few months was particularly striking because it had been a period of extraordinary crises. No demonstrations had been held by the Party on any specific issue, and it was deplorable that we had not held more large meetings. The Propaganda Committee stated that there was great difficulty in obtaining halls for large meetings in London. He suggested that Branches might try and find their own venues and H.O. would give all assistance.

Resolution - Fulham "That every effort be made to increase the number of mid-day meetings."

Carried 75 - 0.

(iii) Sale of Literature and taking of collections. No action.

(iv) Means of Improving Propaganda.

Item for Discussion - Paddington "In future greater stress should be laid by Party members and branches on contacting other organisations such as the Y.C.L., Labour League, Young Conservatives, etc., and state without compromise the Party's case with the object of getting the Party's position better known by members of such organisations, advertising our meetings and selling literature."

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Discussion. Paddington said that although this is already done in Party it is not done in an organised manner but left to individual members.

A St. Pancras delegate stated that he had had some personal experience of discussing with these organisations, and he considered that within some of these organisations there were large numbers of people who were interested in politics and it would be useful to discuss with them the Party's case.

E.C. Report Item iv(a)

1950 Delegate Meeting Resolution:-

"That this Delegate Meeting recommends that the E.C. consider the possibility of holding a Party discussion meeting once a month where points of principle and policy be discussed and opportunity for training in debate be open to all members."

Discussion. A Hackney delegate stated that delegates always supported resolutions of this kind, and then the whole thing was forgotten; that some members went to a great deal of trouble in preparing lectures, and then only a few members turned up to the meetings. He thought that there was no desire on the part of the speakers of the Party to pursue meetings of this kind.

A non-delegate said that pious resolutions were passed urging the Propaganda Committee to hold more meetings, but of what value were they? He considered that the Party were not taking advantage of the most favourable conditions since 1935, yet the response to the Party's case was very favourable wherever heard. He considered it a mistake to conduct propaganda along the lines of holding meetings where the Party was talking to the converted, the Trade Union Club was an instance of this. He thought we should hold fewer meetings, and hold them where we could get audiences that were new to the Party's case. Large audiences should be striven for, and we should endeavour to make more of a "splash", with larger platforms, colourful advertising etc.

Edgware wanted some practical suggestions as to how we could get large numbers to our meetings.

Marylebone said that members left the Party because of lack of interest, and they thought they should be given more jobs to do. Holding of these monthly meetings would increase interest.

Hackney said that they considered that Party resources should be pooled. Neighbouring branches should hold joint fortnightly or monthly meetings, and then a district should be selected for mass canvassing. New propaganda stations should be opened up in the district, and we should be prepared to advertise effectively and in a cheap way. Our Literature and slogans should be confined to one or two specific issues, i.e. War. These joint meetings of Branches could be linked up with the monthly speakers meetings, with the Propaganda

R

ITE
Croy
The
Press

Report of the 47th
Committee
lead to th
schemes
activ

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Committee in attendance. Such concentrated activity should lead to the holding of demonstrations and marches. These schemes could be operated locality by locality, and such activity would bring back those members who had left the Party, and encourage those people outside of the Party to join. Paddington considered that in recent times the Party had been turning in on itself. Instead of discussing the fundamental principles of the Party, members had been discussing such things as "Logical Positivism", and this should not be the case. They considered that when discussion on points of principle took place members' tones were bitter, and this was surely one of the reasons why young members left the Party. If discussion was to play any part in Party activity, a much more friendly attitude should be adopted by members, and it was regrettable that this was not the case. More people would participate if this bitterness were not present.

Bloomsbury said that the root of the problem was how to stir up effort and enthusiasm amongst members. They did not consider that the Party could hold large meetings until there was a demand for them. If those members who were enthusiastic and keen did not object to running small meetings, and only speaking to a few people who have not heard the Party's case before, there was no need to complain. Whilst speakers' classes helped, they did not make speakers, it was the enthusiasm of the individual which told.

Ealing considered that the best form of Propaganda was the holding of debates.

Camberwell said that one of the best ways of getting the Party known was through Trade Unions. They suggested that we should send circular letters to Trade Union branches, with a view to sending Speakers to put the Party's case. All of this could be organised centrally.

A Central Branch member stated that members are too parochial. He did not think they mixed with people outside of the Party, and considered that if they did there would be more opportunity of the Party being known.

An E.C. member said it was unfortunately true that for large meetings the Party had very few speakers to call on. He did not consider that we spoke to the converted. Speakers on the outdoor platform generally were not co-operate. Some members took the speakers test, passed, and that was all they seemed to be interested in; then, their activity stopped.

Camberwell said that there was no variation of speakers, and they thought that young speakers should be given the opportunity of speaking for the Party at large meetings.

Resolution - Hackney (Wilmot and James) "That this Conference recommends that the E.C. instruct the Propaganda Committee to set in motion the necessary machinery for intensifying and integrating Party activity in the East London area." Carried by a large majority.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Amendment:- Bloomsbury (Moore and Devereux) "That 'East London area' be deleted, and that 'London area by area' be substituted."
Lost by a large majority.

Discussion. Hackney said that co-operation was needed and that the activity proposed in this resolution would also include Trade Unions. They wanted to see Branches hold as many meetings as possible, and that the only solution for Party propaganda was to pool resources. The reason for singling out the East London area was that there was a feeling of goodwill there for the Party, and it would be a good place to start. S.W. London stated that in their opinion Branches would not work together as suggested; they had never done so in the past. Advertising in the press and by handbills was recommended.

Edgware were opposed to the amendment because it was far too vague.

Paddington said they supported the resolution, and could visualise it as a miniature Election campaign; that it would give members something to aim at.

Bloomsbury thought that if the resolution as amended were carried it would give the E.C. no option other than to take some definite action in the matter.

(v) "Psychology and Socialist Propaganda." No action.

(vi) Propaganda Meetings; Summary of Statistics. No action.

(vii) Speakers.

Resolution - Camberwell (Baldwin and Cosham) "That this Conference recommends that all mid-week meetings be run under the auspices of the Propaganda Committee; that if other members wished to run other lunch hour meetings on their own they should advise the Propaganda Committee beforehand.

Resolution - Bloomsbury (Devereux) and Birmingham (Keller)
"Next business." Carried 31 - 15.

5. LITERATURE:

(i) Weekly Newspaper. No action.

(ii) Fortnightly 'Socialist Standard'.

Resolution - Edgware "That this Conference deploras the refusal of the 1950 E.C. to prepare a detailed report on a fortnightly 'S.S.' requested by the 1950 Conference and Delegate Meeting and instructs the 1951 E.C. to prepare the necessary report for submission to the 1951 Delegate Meeting."

Lost 26 - 47.

ICE
Croy
The
Press
Resol

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference strongly censures the 47th E.C. for failing to carry out the requests to investigate the possibility of producing a fortnightly 'S.S.' which were made by large majorities at both the 1950 Conference and Delegate Meeting."
Lost 24 - 48.

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to prepare a detailed report on the necessary finance and organisation involved in the production of a fortnightly 'Socialist Standard!.'"
Lost 33 - 46.

(iii) 'Socialist Standard' Material.

Item for Discussion - Southend "That this Conference recommends that the Editorial Committee shall illustrate some articles for the 'Socialist Standard' with reprints of photographs, cartoons, diagrams and maps."

Resolution - Southend (Cottis and Grisley) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to investigate the possibility of including any cartoons or useful diagrams in the 'S.S.'."
Lost 14 - 31.

Discussion. Southend Branch said that the Party was not opposed in principle and they saw no difficulty in brightening up the 'S.S.' The E.C. should encourage members who can make the 'S.S.' more attractive.
An Editorial Committee member said that the use of diagrams would entail more cost, that members should send cartoons well before the middle of the month.
Hackney gave some information on the cost of cartoons, etc. but were opposed to increase in the price of the 'S.S.'
Kingston thought that cartoons, etc., would increase sales of the 'S.S.' and would like to see the front page brightened.
S.W.London were not concerned about the cost, but the 'S.S.' should not be placed in the same category as the "Daily Mirror". We want material in the "Socialist Standard" which can be assimilated by Workers which will enable them to understand their position in society.
Another Editorial Committee member said that continuity was essential.

- (iv) 'Socialist Standard': Supply and Quantity of Articles.
No action.
- (v) 'Socialist Standard': Rejection of Articles. No action.
- (vi) 'Socialist Standard': Alteration of Articles. No action.

Discussion. Paddington said that the Editorial Committee does not do sufficient work in editing. Grammatical mistakes occurred and paragraphs were badly worded. Badly written articles should be

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

altered. There was too much repetition and dull and uninteresting articles; the lay-out of the 'S.S.' was unattractive and badly designed; sub-titles should be used; no fill up articles should be published.

The Editorial Committee said that the lay-out was approved by the E.C. in April 1950, and members should submit their designs and write their suggestions to the E.C. Generally, none of this type of suggested improvements effect the sales. The use of sub-headings was discontinued during the war owing to the shortage of pages. If desired, writers themselves should sub-head their articles. Some writers think their articles are correct as written and object to alterations. Therefore, articles are altered as little as possible as we do not want to lose writers. Only the best articles of those received are put into the 'S.S.'. Correcting at the printers proof stage is kept to the minimum as these tend to lead to errors that cannot be corrected. Such errors were impossible to stop and were experienced in all publications.

Hackney argued that members should not be too critical. The resolution was pious. The solution was for many more members to learn to write well on any aspect of the Party Case.

Chamberwell said that the Editorial Committee had a very difficult job. They were more concerned with the contents of the 'S.S.' and the remarks of the workers to whom the 'S.S.' was sold. The 'S.S.' had been regularly published and this was a feat that should be appreciated.

Paddington held that members grossly exaggerated and could then only proffer the use of sub-headings and general improvement in editing as criticisms.

Bloomsbury said that the Editorial Committee should have the full backing of the Party in all its work. Comrades should not object to their articles being altered.

The Editorial Committee stated that clearly worded articles were necessary and drew the attention of the Conference to tributes from outsiders regarding the 'S.S.' The Editorial Committee was a voluntary committee and its main work was to fill the 'S.S.' and see that articles were in line with the Party Case. They had no time available to try to teach members how to write. That was a job that could only be learnt by intending writers themselves and required the acquisition of knowledge of the Party Case and practise in presenting it in written form. The Committee did its best to refrain from writing too much in the 'S.S.' and to do more editing. This was often difficult either owing to the shortage and/or quality of the articles submitted. Also articles were promised by experienced writers but were not produced. Hence, frequently at the last moment articles had to be dashed off by the Committee members so that the 'S.S.' would be published on time. The solution was for more members to make up their minds to become writers and devote their serious attention to the matter.

R.

17/11/50
Croy
The
Pres.
Resol.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference
(vii) 'Socialist'
(viii) 'Socialist'

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

- (vii) 'Socialist Standard': Date of Publication. No action.
- (viii) 'Socialist Standard': Number Printed. No action.
- (ix) Pamphlets: Appointment of Pamphlets Committee.

In answer to a question regarding the position of this Committee the General Secretary said that there was a Report by one member of the Committee stating that the Committee had done no work; the E.C. had deferred the matter pending an opinion by Conference.

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Walters) "That this Conference is of the opinion that the Editorial Committee is the best committee to deal with pamphlets."

Resolution - Lewisham (Guy and Rose) "That consideration of this resolution be deferred until the 1951 Delegate Meeting pending a report from the E.C." Carried 36 - 13.

Discussion. Paddington said they were instructed to table their resolution. The E.C. tried to fulfil Conference instructions. It is the opinion of the Branch that the Editorial Committee should be responsible for the production of pamphlets. S.W. London said that the intention was to relieve the Editorial Committee of some of its work. The E.C. were lax in carrying out its duties. It was the job of the E.C. to see that the Pamphlets Committee did its work. Bloomsbury drew attention to the fact that last year exactly the opposite motion was passed, i.e. for a pamphlets Committee to be set up. Clearly all the facts were not then considered and such issues should be dealt with more carefully in the future before decisions were embarked upon. The General Secretary said that the E.C. tried to implement the past Conference instructions, but that it was in difficulties in obtaining suitable Comrades to serve on a Pamphlets Committee.

Resolution - Hackney "That publication of a new edition of 'Questions of the Day' be expedited." Carried 75 - 1.

Resolution - Hackney "That a new edition of 'Socialism and Religion' be published." Carried 52 - 19.

Discussion. Several delegates questioned the exact intention of the resolution.

Item for Discussion. - Bloomsbury "The Executive Committee to consider the production of a yearly review of major events in pamphlet form, as well as the re-publication of 'Questions of the Day'."

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Resolution - Kelvingrove "That the E.C. investigate the possibility of publishing an annual which could include articles of a theoretical nature which have appeared in continued form in early 'Standards', reprints of the Marxist classics and works which are now out of print. It could also include articles specially written for it and if possible, contain cartoons and illustrations. The price not to be more than 10/-d."

Lost 26 - 49.

Discussion. Kelvingrove stated that such an annual would enable a fuller case to be presented than in the 'S.S.'. The 'S.S.' had to fulfil a two-fold function - it had to appeal to the uninitiated, and also help educate new members. It fell short in this second function. Educational articles were either not of sufficiently good quality, or were in serial form protracted over very long periods or not completed. They suggested an annual might solve the problem of this educational function, and thought it might also contain translations of Marxist works at present unobtainable in English.

(x) Pamphlet on War.

No action.

(xi) Pamphlets: Cover Design.

No action.

(xii) 'S.S.' and Pamphlets: Sales and Stocks.

No action.

(xiii) Literature Sales Organisation.

Resolution - Manchester "That private subscribers receive their copies of the 'S.S.' through Provincial branches." Lost 14 - 45.

Discussion. Manchester explained that they want closer contact with members of provincial branches and subscribers. A member of the Literature Committee said that it would delay the despatch of the 'S.S.' if it were done through the branches and outlined other possible objections that had been raised in the past to such schemes.

Resolution - Bloomsbury "That this Conference views with concern the fall in literature sales and instructs the E.C. to form a Literature Sales Committee (in place of the Central Circulating Committee) composed of energetic, enthusiastic comrades who will appreciate the need to increase the sales of Party literature." Carried 47 - 30.

Discussion. Bloomsbury said that 6,000 copies of the 'S.S.' are printed and many are unsold. There is no Central Circulating Committee in existence. When such a committee was in existence sales of literature were much greater. Literature could be sold at various non-party meetings. There is need for a Literature Sales Committee to emphasise the importance of sales of the 'S.S.'.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

(xiv) Book Department.

No action.

Item for Discussion.- Bloomsbury "Employment of full-time writers."

Resolution - Lewisham (Guy and Locke) "That this Conference is opposed to the employment of full-time writers at the present time."

Discussion. Bloomsbury said that if we had a full-time writer in the Party he would have far more time available and it would cut out the necessity of members having to write when they could snatch an hour or two. They thought it would be only a matter of time before the Party had a fortnightly 'S.S.' and then it would be essential to have someone employed for this work. Someone who had the time available could write more topical articles, and if necessary do so at very short notice. Lewisham said that apart from the financial side of the question, at the present time we had no need to employ someone. To do so would mean that this one person would in fact be writing the whole of the 'S.S.'. This work could still be carried out by voluntary effort. They agreed that if in the future we did have a fortnightly 'S.S.' then the matter would again need to be considered.

S.W. London said that the resolution implies that the Party is opposed to the employment of a full-time editor or writer, and it would be a mistake to go on record in this way. The General Secretary said that if this resolution was carried it would cut across a 1950 Delegate Meeting recommendation that this and similar matters should be referred to a Party Meeting. The E.C. had set up a Committee called the Head Office Organisation Committee and he suggested that the Conference let the Delegate Meeting recommendation stand and await the Committee's report.

Resolution - Edgware (Price) and Camberwell (Baldwin)
"Next business".

Carried.

Resolution - St. Pancras "That this Conference deprecates the action of the E.C. in instructing Comrade Thompson to cease publication of 'Socialist View' and instructs the E.C. to rescind the resolutions in question."

Lost 6 - 77.

Resolution - Southend "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to give guidance and encouragement to those Comrades who are interested in the production of an internal Party journal to facilitate the fullest discussion on controversial subjects."

Lost 32 - 36.

Discussion. A Bloomsbury delegate said that the 'Socialist View' was never a controversial journal but a propaganda one. A St. Pancras delegate said that his branch had changed its view and were now opposed to this item going on the agenda,

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

for the following reasons. The Branch considered that an inter-party journal should be under the control of the E.C., a sub-committee or a committee appointed by Conference. The 'Socialist View' should not be carried on by individual members.

Fulham Branch said that the question of the 'Socialist View' could not be dealt with by the E.C. under Rule 10. E.C. action was, in the opinion of Fulham Branch, out of order. No member of the S.P.G.B. should be debarred from producing any journal. The E.C. were not clear on their reasons for asking Thompson to stop the journal. The E.C. should have examined the principle.

Resolution - West Ham "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to provide an internal Party journal for the publication of:-
(1) Letters from members on subjects of a controversial nature on which there is no official Party line. (2) Articles of a technical nature considered to be unsuitable for publication in the 'S.S.'." Lost 30 - 44.

Amendment - Manchester "Delete all after 'members' and insert 'on subjects concerning which there is a controversy within the Party.'". Lost 21 - 61.

Discussion. An E.C. member was not clear on the Manchester amendment. If only those articles on which there is no official Party line are to be discussed, then that would mean that there could be no discussion of the Party's case. An internal Party journal should not exclude discussion on the general principles of the Party, it should permit a full exchange of views and this would not be possible if the amendment were carried.

Croydon said their Branch was not opposed to another journal, but strongly opposed to an inter-party journal. The Party had nothing to hide. Subjects of a controversial nature should be in the 'S.S.'. Everything that can be discussed inside the Party can be discussed outside the Party.

Manchester replying, said that clause (2) of the resolution was being precluded by the amendment by an error of wording. This had not been the intention.

West Ham said the branch did not want a regular weekly or a monthly journal. When there was sufficient material this should be published.

Kelvingrove Branch considered that the journal would have to be published regularly otherwise it would fail in its purpose. However, efforts of members would be better employed in making Socialists than such a journal.

Woolwich Branch were opposed. There were sufficient means to discuss controversial ideas inside the Party. It was not necessary to have a Party journal.

Fulham Branch said that there was no means of settling

R

ITE

Croy

the t

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

controversies within the Party. The branch feel that a controversial journal is essential.

Paddington said that there should be no objection to a journal of a controversial nature. It should be insisted upon, however, that there should be no ambiguity in the title of the journal. Articles of a controversial nature which are anti-socialist would probably appear in the journal and these could be interpreted as the opinion of the Party, especially if the journal's title implied that it contained official views.

West Ham winding up said that one delegate had mentioned that the journal would have to be regular. This was not necessary. There was no great hurry. It was not true that there was enough scope for controversy in the Party unless one could write about them. Members do not have an opportunity of clarifying their ideas by putting them on paper. Difficulties as to the journal being taken as the official opinion would not arise if the journal were not published by the Party. There was need in the Party for written controversy.

Item for Discussion.- Glasgow "The advisability for an inter-party journal for the purpose of discussing controversial matters; controlled by an appropriate Party committee."

Resolution - Edgware (Waite and Price) "That this Conference is in favour of an internal Party journal and recommends the E.C. to appoint a committee to establish one." Carried 48 - 14.

Discussion. A Glasgow delegate stated that this was included in error.

Camberwell stated that the Branch were opposed to such a journal existing. They considered that if members had something to write about of a controversial nature they could submit them to the Editorial Committee for publication in the 'S.S.'.

Marylebone said that there was no method in the Party whereby conflicting opinions could be discussed. They considered that this would eventually lead to "cliques" in the party which would be very bad. An inter-party journal would be the answer.

West Ham Branch said that they did not consider the 'S.S.' was the place for controversial matters of a certain nature to be discussed, a special journal would be far better.

S.W. London said that the Party had nothing at all to hide, and they considered that all points of difference between various members could be quite openly discussed in the 'S.S.'. If views on certain issues were held strongly enough, six branches could call a special Party meeting in order to discuss the matter.

A Southend delegate said that he thought some Comrades were in a rut. They did not appear to be interested in anything other the Party's case, and anything controversial was

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

avoided. A journal of this nature would enable all members to take an active part.

Edgware in opening on the resolution said that it was worded to avoid confusion with resolutions Conference had already considered. There was a lot of room for discussion on subjects not of a fundamental nature. The journal should be a controversial one for differences of interpretation. There was important work to be done - by a Committee supervised by the E.C. - as the principle was a good one particularly in view of the increasing membership and number of youthful members.

Another Edgware delegate considered there was plenty of scope for an internal journal. Other mediums have not fulfilled the same purpose - monthly discussion meetings had fallen flat and there was not much opportunity at branch discussions. The 'S.S.' was a propaganda journal not solely for Party members, and we had to find a medium for controversies.

West Ham supported the resolution. They were opposed to any controversial matter in the 'S.S.' as this was the Party organ and must put forward the declared Party position. If spoken controversy is allowed we must also allow written controversy. They hoped such a journal would provide great encouragement for new writers.

S.W. London were opposed to the resolution and considered it an attempt to fight defeat on instructed resolutions. They were definitely opposed to creating one impression in the Party organ and another in an internal Party journal. There was plenty of controversy in old 'S.S.'. Any differences amongst ourselves could be discussed at branches. The Party had nothing to hide. Members should read books and study.

Kingston said that the need for an internal Party journal was made evident by the completely different and opposing votes in branches. We had a journal in 1937 but the E.C. had to wind it up owing to lack of interest.

St. Pancras were not opposed to an internal Party journal properly organised. In written discussion it was possible to give expression to second thoughts. Such a journal could possibly include the Companion Parties and help to form an international character.

Camberwell were opposed. Any internal journal must take effort from the major struggle for Socialism. Members should read books to gain knowledge. They had found no difficulty in expressing their views on Trade Unions through normal Party channels.

A Fulham delegate said they were not afraid to see controversial issues in the 'S.S.' but this was not the proper place. There were controversies in the Party and an internal journal was the way for these to find expression.

A Bloomsbury delegate said that they could not see how any

R
17th
Croy.
The
Pres.
RESOL

Report of the 47th Annual Conference
members who supported
opposed an internal journal
disappointed delegates thought
be introduced in an internal
controversy

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

members who supported education classes and propaganda could oppose an internal journal.

A Hackney delegate thought that delegates might be very disappointed in an internal journal, as there were few controversies really worth controversy. Controversy had to be related to the Party case. There was not a lack of controversy in the 'S.S.'. If an internal journal were launched it would sink on the rocks in a short time.

Marylebone thought such a journal would fall as there were no subjects for it. They would like to see more discussions.

A member of the Editorial Committee said that internal discussion would be better in an internal journal. Early discussion in the 'S.S.' was to formulate the Party's position in the early days. The 'S.S.' should always express the majority view of the Party. There should be fullest discussion of fundamental points and an internal journal would help this. By means of such a journal we would obtain a united and informed view of members.

A Manchester delegate thought we should get down to thrashing out differences in order to make our propaganda better.

Resolution - Manchester "That a committee be set up to make a special study of the works of Marx and Engels. This committee to invite comment from individual Party members and the results of the committee's findings be used to arrive at as precise an assessment of the relationship of the theories of Marx and Engels and the case of the S.P.G.B. and most particularly the points of disagreement between the S.P.G.B. and the theories of Marx and Engels." Lost 22 - 47.

Addendum - Leyton "That the committee consist of nominees from branches, the number not to exceed two from each branch." Lost 13 - 54.

6. EDUCATION:

Resolution - Paddington (Bryan and Cudmore) "That this Conference considers that the present classes are unsatisfactory and recommend that the E.C. consider the whole question of the education of Party members." Lost 13 - 27.

Discussion. A Paddington delegate said that many classes were given by tutors who were not experienced, this might be good for them but not for the pupils. The whole organisation was bad. Classes had not started properly on the dates advertised and impromptu lectures had to be arranged because tutors had not turned up. The syllabuses were not adhered to. An Ealing delegate said that the classes were not sufficiently attended - that was the real complaint, and the fault lay with the membership.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

The Education Committee admitted that there was some muddle in the early days but this was overcome. Very few members attended at the start and this did not give tutors moral support. The strength of the classes depended on loyalty and continuity of pupils. This criticism should have been taken to the E.C. Paddington in winding up, said that the important points had not been answered, particularly those regarding pupil teachers and the syllabuses not being adhered to.

7. TRAINING OF MEMBERS FOR FULL-TIME POSTS: No action.

8. PUBLICITY: No action.

9. ELECTORAL ACTIVITY:

Resolution - Camberwell "That at all future elections, the Party shall attempt to secure a hearing at all Trade Union branches in the constituency or constituencies to be contested."

Carried 52 - 5.

Discussion. Camberwell said that the street corners were not the only places for electoral propaganda and a serious contest involved getting a hearing other than on street corners, particularly if the weather was bad. Trade Unionists were most approachable, and had any modern political party made its way on street corners alone. We would not get a step further without support in the trade union field. A West Ham delegate stated that we had tried for years to get speakers at trade union branches. We should have to start a long time before election times and we had to ensure that speakers were asked. This was going on all the time. We should go anywhere where people would hear the Party's case.

Camberwell in winding-up said that our efforts were concentrated in all other directions except towards trade unions.

Resolution - Paddington "That this Conference instructs the E.C. to continue with the Party's electoral activity and to contest at least North Paddington and East Ham South at the next General Election."

Lost 37 - 47.

Addendum - Kelvingrove "If in the opinion of the Executive Committee, Party funds permit electoral activity."

Carried 43 - 39.

Addendum - St. Pancras "Providing funds are available."

Lost 22 - 49.

Amendment - Edware "Delete all after 'activity' and add, 'but that consideration be given to constituencies other than North

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Paddington and East Ham South and that the E.C. instruct the Parliamentary Committee to report to them on the suitability of other constituencies."

Lost 21 - 66.

Resolution - S.W. London "That in view of the serious financial position of the Party, contesting of elections be discontinued until such time as adequate support is forthcoming."

Lost 23 - 62.

Amendment-- Manchester "Delete all after 'such time as' and substitute 'the whole question of contesting elections has been re-discussed at a Party Conference.'"

Lost 24 - 63.

Resolution - Camberwell (Baldwin and Lawlor) "That the Party continues electoral activity in areas where the E.C. see fit."

Carried 43 - 20.

(9 Abstentions)

Resolution - Ealing (Curtis) and Fulham (Keyes) "That further consideration of electoral activity be deferred until the next Annual Conference when all questions including finance can be considered in a clearer light."

Lost by a large majority.

Discussion. Camberwell said that to fail to continue with electoral activity would be interpreted to mean that we could go no further. We must contest elections - and not simply be an educational bureau.

A Paddington delegate said that we had taken an historical and irrevocable step in 1945. He was of the opinion that the majority of members were in support of electoral activity but there was a body of opinion that it should be discontinued in North Paddington and East Ham South.

South West London were not concerned where candidates were put up. When electoral activity was ripe it would not have to be decided at Head Office but by the branch in an area where there evidence of support. Membership in an area was evidence and membership can only be obtained by propaganda and this could be carried on at all times, not merely at elections. We should not participate in elections until the working class manifested its support.

Edgware said that the only justification for the resolution was the confusion caused by the results on previous instructed resolutions. The question was whether we are or are not in support of contesting elections, and he would support the resolution.

West Ham were opposed, not only on financial grounds. They had learned by experience that the working class was not ready for the Party. They also thought that the claim that there was a gain of publicity was not correct. We had not sufficient support to justify expenditure, and electoral

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.):

activity was premature at the present time.

An Ealing delegate considered that as a political party we must be in favour of fighting elections. We should, however, first concentrate on building up a head office organisation and that the next step was to build up our own membership. Manchester branch considered that electoral activity was premature and they had been consistently opposed to it.

A Marylebone delegate stated that we had changed our approach to the electorate in 1945. We should first make more Socialists and then put our candidates forward. The desire should come from the body of the workers and we should concentrate on the propaganda of Socialist ideas.

An Islington delegate said that as we are a political party trying to capture political power we should contest elections whenever possible.

Another Ealing delegate stated that if this resolution had been the only one on the agenda his branch would have supported it emphatically. Ealing and West Ham branches would make proper areas from the point of view of numerical strength. If the Party was not now ready, when would it be ready?

A Fulham delegate said they had consistently opposed contesting elections. Those against it had had their eyes open all the time and realised the uselessness of electoral activity. The results of propaganda did not justify the efforts of members or the expenditure of money.

Another Edgware delegate said that nobody could be opposed to electoral activity, but only where, and when, it should take place. After six years it was tragic that we should still be discussing the time and place. When there were sufficient members in a particular place, or at a particular time, then they would come to the E.C., and all this discussion would not be needed. When we see greater attendances at our meetings then we could consider that we were getting somewhere. The publicity that accrued was negligible, and we must await the appropriate time.

An E.C. member stated that nobody was opposed in principle. The only question was when and where. The Party should have started electoral activity in 1904. No one branch could solely carry out a campaign. Such a large amount of activity must be supported by members outside of any one branch. It was the little beginnings that led to big things. He had never seen such activity as at election times and that was worth while. He thought that the low votes obtained had helped to bring about a change of mind - that was a wrong approach. If there was no enthusiasm it was not worth while carrying on. The majority decision of the Party should be carried out once it had been taken, and it had been taken.

A Hackney delegate stated that electoral activity was merely one avenue of propaganda amongst many other avenues of propaganda. The test was, was the propaganda worth the time

ITE
Croy
The t
Pres.
RESOL

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

and money to be spent.

West Ham branch provided evidence and had been guided by experience. We were a Party of small resources, and we should ask ourselves the question whether the results of the last three elections have made for the progress of the Party. Without concrete evidence we should do other things first.

Another Paddington delegate said that after three elections he was not disillusioned. It appeared that suddenly electoral activity had become something different from ordinary propaganda. Electoral activity was usually general Party activity, and was a useful thing. The working class would be ready the more we kept plugging away at them. We should take the opportunity of the excellent propaganda available at election times.

An E.C. member said that he too was not disillusioned. Electoral activity was the finest propaganda vehicle we could employ, and further, it stimulated members to increased activity.

Another E.C. member said that he supported the last delegate from Paddington. We must keep on. We must have enthusiasm and he had been a little distressed at the disheartening comments of delegates.

Camberwell in winding up, said that the opposition had seriously under-rated the opportunities of publicity not afforded at any other times. We must not retreat from the start that we had made with electoral activity.

10. REVISION OF DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES:

Resolution - Fulham (Cox and Keyes) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to set up a committee to examine the possibility of revising the wording of the Declaration of Principles."

Carried 30 - 25.

Discussion. Edgware said that they did not like the way the E.C. dealt with the 1950 Delegate Meeting resolution. They should have appointed a committee to look into the question, and if then they decided it was not acceptable, the matter could have been brought to the Party and they notified of this decision.

The General Secretary stated that the position really had been that, because the resolution was actually a recommendation from the floor of the Delegate Meeting the E.C. did not embark on the suggestions, as it took the view that, on such a serious matter they needed to be instructed by a Conference i.e. by an instruction appearing on a final agenda. This meant that all branches would have first seen such a resolution and instructed their delegates how to vote. The branches had not done so and therefore, presumably were not anxious to revise the Declaration of Principles.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

11. ORGANISATIONS ABROAD:

(i) W.S.P. of U.S.: Proposed alterations to Declaration of Principles.

(ii) General.

Various questions were asked regarding the strength and position of the Companion Parties, and it was also asked why no report was included from the Overseas Secretary. The Overseas Secretary informed the Conference that he had reported last year and there was no change in the position. He claimed that his report last year was not considered by the E.C. and he had not, therefore, prepared one this year. The General Secretary stated that, as given in the E.C. Report, no information had come to hand.

Resolution - Hackney (James and Temple) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to call for a report from the Overseas Secretary on the position of the Companion Parties."

Agreed.

Resolution - Paddington (Walters and Bryan) "That this Conference suggests that we should pay for the 'Western Socialist' and let the W.S.P. of U.S. have the 'Socialist Standard' without payment."

Resolution - Camberwell (Cosham) and Southend (Cottis) "That this matter be referred to the E.C. for report to the Delegate Meeting."

Agreed.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS were read from the W.S.P. of U.S. and S.P. of Ireland, and letters from sympathisers in Africa and Austria.

Resolution - Lewisham and Palmers Green "That fraternal greetings be sent to all Parties and these Comrades."

Agreed.

12. FINANCE:

(i) Branch Funds.

(ii) Statement of Income and Expenditure and Summary of Balances.

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "Ways and Means of raising funds."

Bloomsbury stated that they had not much to say on this item as they put it on the agenda before the response to the New Premises Fund was known.

Resolution - Bloomsbury (Adams and Kersley) "That this Conference recommends that socials and raffles should only be organised

ITEM
Croy
The
Pres.
RESOL.

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

by the Party where they meet the entertainment needs of the members and that otherwise funds should be raised in ways which form part of the propaganda and educational activity of the Party."

Lost 16 - 30.

Bloomsbury opened saying that it was not good policy to raise funds by the methods of raffles, etc. The basic reason for the existence of the Party was to propagate Socialism and funds should be asked for the specific purposes for which they are required.

Camberwell could not see the sense in restricting ways of obtaining money for various purposes; the Party should get money from anywhere it could and we could not afford to choose. Another Bloomsbury delegate said that it was not good to run socials for specific purposes; they should be simply for the entertainment of members.

West Ham thought that the resolution was nonsensical, as it was not possible by means of a resolution to determine the motives of members.

Paddington supported the resolution. We should be very concerned where funds came from. Apart from taking up the time of members people would subscribe irrespective of their interest in Socialism. The Branch did not want to see the Party deteriorate into a finance raising body.

The Social Committee thought the resolution meant well but members were trying to make a principle out of it. They did not recommend running dances, etc., for specific purposes although some branches had done so. The E.C. had passed a resolution in line with this resolution.

S.W. London stated that in the past we had run successful draws, and lurking behind Bloomsbury branch's resolution was a desire for moral rectitude. We were primarily a political organisation but they were not adverse to obtaining money so long as the Party kept within the law. These matters could be left to the E.C.

An E.C. member asked why this puritanical approach of Bloomsbury branch? He saw no objection to getting money from anywhere to help us to carry on the work of the Party, and had no objection to public dances, whist drives, etc., and did not care whether the people knew they were giving money for Socialism or not.

The General Secretary read the E.C.'s resolution on this question and said that the E.C. wished to avoid activity being directed simply to money-raising activities as it was not the purpose for which the Party was organised; that funds should come mainly in support of the Party's political objective.

Another Bloomsbury delegate said that it was just because we were a political organisation that they had put forward this resolution. The question was how much time Party members should spend on money-raising activities instead of propagating

Report

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Socialism. Their resolution was a move to endorse the E.C.'s action.

Another West Ham delegate asked why we could not cash in on the general methods of raising funds used throughout the country by various organisations. This would possibly bring members into activity.

Bloomsbury wound up saying that in any case raffles were not necessarily the best way of raising funds. By two applications to members and sympathisers the Party had raised £3,000 - the direct approach was the better. If members were available for activity their activity should be directed to propaganda.

Item for Discussion - Bloomsbury "That for purposes of business and finance the Party year should run from 1st December to 30th November."

Bloomsbury said that they had put this item on the Agenda mainly because of the short time under Party rules between the end of the year and Easter this year.

The General Secretary explained the present position under Party rules. These did not state that the E.C. Report to Conference should go out with the call for items for the Preliminary Agenda but the E.C. had agreed that it was good business that it should, in order that branches should have the Report before them when framing instructed resolutions to Conference. If the Party's year was altered it would give more time to prepare the E.C.'s Report before the call for the Preliminary Agenda went out, would improve Head Office procedure, and also assist branches.

Resolution - Fulham (Irvine and Cox) "That this Conference recommends the E.C. to consider the advisability of the Party year running from 1st December to 30th November."

Carried 44 - 9.

13. E.C. SUB-COMMITTEES.

Resolution - Leyton "That details for vacancies on Committees for which members are required be circularised to Branches."

Carried 53 - 4.

Discussion. Bloomsbury wanted to know whether this meant that all vacancies would automatically be circularised or whether it be left to the discretion of the E.C.

Camberwell Branch said that the E.C. could of course use their discretion, but the resolution did in fact cover all vacancies from the beginning of the year.

Edgware was opposed because in their view the resolution tied the E.C. down to circularising the Branches at the time it was considering electing members to its Sub-Committees and was not necessary. The E.C. only needed to circularise

LT
Croy
The
pres.
RESOL

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Branches when it was unable to find suitable Comrades for Committees.

14. CONFERENCE PROCEDURE:

Item for Discussion - Edgware Branch "Can Conference procedure be improved."

Edgware Branch did not think the existing method the best one. The chairman should be aware of the task he has to do, and should be able beforehand to discuss the procedure and go through the agenda and report. Inexperienced delegates found difficulty in following the procedure at the present time. They agreed with the 1935 terms of reference approved by Party Poll but these had not been carried out. They should be carried out in future. Items on the agenda not really for Conference should be referred to the sub-committees as provided in the 1935 terms of reference.

The General Secretary read the 1935 Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Committee which convened Conference procedure and upon which branches had voted at the time.

15. AMENDMENTS TO RULES:

Camberwell, Fulham, Islington & S.W.London Branches:
Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d' and insert '6d'."

Lost 37 - 48.

St. Pancras Branch:

Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d' and insert '4d'."

Lost 38 - 44.

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'threopence'."

Lost 15 - 55.

Islington Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'fourpence'."

Lost 17 - 57.

S.W.London Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'fivepence'."

Lost 9 - 74.

Hackney Branch:

Rule 17, Line 4. "Delete 'appoint all Party representatives in debates'."

Lost 12 - 73.

16. ADOPTION OF E.C. REPORT:

Resolution - Birmingham (Grew) and High Wycombe (Roe) "That the report of the 47th Executive Committee be adopted." Agreed.

COLLECTIONS:

First Day	-	£14.10. 0.
Second Day	-	£11.15. 6.
Third Day	-	£ 9.10. 0.
		<u>£35.15. 6.</u>

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

RECEIPTS.

Conference collections	£51.18. 2
Rally collection	16. 2. 6
Dance, canteen, etc.	44. 7. 3
	<u>£112. 7.11</u>

PAYMENTS.

Hire of hall	£50. 0. 0.
Dance, canteen, etc.	18. 3. 6.
Balance to Party Funds	44. 4. 5.
	<u>£112. 7.11.</u>

Report of the 47th Annual Conference (Contd.).

Branches when it was unable to find suitable Comrades for Committees.

14. CONFERENCE PROCEDURE:

Item for Discussion - Edgware Branch "Can Conference procedure be improved."

Edgware Branch did not think the existing method the best one. The chairman should be aware of the task he has to do, and should be able beforehand to discuss the procedure and go through the agenda and report. Inexperienced delegates found difficulty in following the procedure at the present time. They agreed with the 1935 terms of reference approved by Party Poll but these had not been carried out. They should be carried out in future. Items on the agenda not really for Conference should be referred to the sub-committees as provided in the 1935 terms of reference. The General Secretary read the 1935 Terms of Reference for the Standing Orders Committee which convened Conference procedure and upon which branches had voted at the time.

15. AMENDMENTS TO RULES:

Camberwell, Fulham, Islington & S.W.London Branches:

Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d' and insert '6d'." Lost 37 - 48.

St. Pancras Branch:

Rule 2, Line 1. "Delete '3d' and insert '4d'." Lost 38 - 44.

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'threopence'." Lost 15 - 55.

Islington Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'fourpence'." Lost 17 - 57.

S.W.London Branch:

Rule 9, Line 2. "Delete 'twopence' and insert 'fivepence'." Lost 9 - 74.

Hackney Branch:

Rule 17, Line 4. "Delete 'appoint all Party representatives in debates'." Lost 12 - 73.

16. ADOPTION OF E.C. REPORT:

Resolution - Birmingham (Grew) and High Wycombe (Roe) "That the report of the 47th Executive Committee be adopted." Agreed.

COLLECTIONS:

First Day	- £14.10. 0.
Second Day	- £11.15. 6.
Third Day	- £ 9.10. 0.
	<u>£35.15. 6.</u>

FINANCIAL SUMMARY:

RECEIPTS.

Conference collections	£51.18. 2
Rally collection	16. 2. 6
Dance, canteen, etc.	44. 7. 3
	<u>£112. 7.11</u>

PAYMENTS.

Hire of hall	£50. 0. 0.
Dance, canteen, etc.	18. 3. 6.
Balance to Party Funds	44. 4. 5.
	<u>£112. 7.11.</u>